MARYLAND FRUIT GROWERS' NEWS-LETTER

AUGUST 1938

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Troubles Here and There

Everybody agrees that growing fruit or any other crop is a job that has its bad moments. Sometimes one wonders if everybody else is having similar headaches. Maybe the hardships are not as bad as they might be. Let's look around a little.

In Daily Press Service, July 25, 1938, issued by the U.S.Department of Agriculture, the results of tests with blowers as a frost protection in California orchards, reported in July, "Agricultural Engineering", are summarized as follows: (1) under conditions of temperature inversions of 10 degrees in 100-foot elevation, air temperatures in orchards may be maintained 3 degrees higher, with a blower mounted on a tower 40 to 50 feet above the ground; (2) blowers of 75 h.p. size will not handle over 10 acres, excepting under favorable air drainage; and (3) it may be possible to effectively combine a blower with orchard heaters." Now, just think of the cost and maintenance of 75 h.p. blowers and heaters, too. We just burn some damp straw or old auto tires.

Then, in the 1938 Proceedings of the New York State Horticultural Society we read a report of a visit to the Northwest apple section. It is reported by the visitor, H.A. Rollins of Connecticut, that the average size of the individual orchards in the Wenatchee section is 10 to 20 acres. Irrigation and stationary spray plants are used. Codling moth is a real pest, and by use of so-called "dynamite sprays" as well as oils, a heavy deposit of lead arsenate must be built up on the fruit. As high as 75 to 100 gallons of spray per tree per application are used to build up a spray coating. On top of that, arsenic accumulates in the soil, and is toxic to alfalfa, so that it is a problem of either trying to correct the soil reaction or finding another cover crop, and alfalfa seems to be the best cover crop that they can find.

The growers in that section find that they must produce at least 500 bushels per acre to stay in business. Some orchards are producing 800 bushels, and a few are running as high as 1,000 bushels per acre. The bees have a hard time out there, so to make sure of a real crop, the growers are getting pollen from other orchards and are hand-pollinating the blossoms , using either the tip of the finger, or a camel hair brush. This costs about 15 to 30 cents a tree.

Then, there is that question of washing the fruit, and many growers in the West are using tanden washers, running the fruit through both an acid and an alkali wash. Then when that is done, and the fruit is packed, they are still 3,000 miles from some of their markets. Those growers are discouraged, at times, but they are not licked. They are putting up an attractive pack, and they are ADVERTISING. This must mean that the Eastern growers should do all that is possible to improve the pack, grading, and package of their fruit; try to reduce the number of low-grade apples that reach the large markets; discard culls except for by-products markets, and then join up with the advertising movement. In short, have a real product, and tell the world about it.

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Bruise your fruit and maul your profits.

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Bruised Fruit.

Have you gone over the grader and padded the rough spots? Are the field crates in good shape, with no nails or broken slats to injure fruit? Did you notice the new picking buckets exhibited at the summer meeting? They will reduce bruising. They hold only 1/2 bushel, but when pickers try to lug a bushel of fruit in a picking bag, there is bound to be some bruising.

In Maryland, in 1935, it was found that some orchards had as high as 23% of the culls that could have been culls because of bruising alone. In 1928, during cull studies made in Michigan, it was found that bruises accounted for 15% of the cull apples - more than the percentage of fruit culled out for codling moth sting, aphis, russet, worm, etc. In Missouri, in a cull study, in 1928, mechanical injury to apples ran 12%, being second only to lack of size, as a cause of cull apples. In 1929, the bruised fruit accounted for about 6% of the culls, or seventh in the list of causes of cull fruit.

The University of Maryland Extension Service has issued a series of four placards to be posted in fruit packing houses. The placards are intended to impress upon the packing house crews (and the Boss) the importance of handling fruit carefully. Any growers who desire sets of these placards may write A.F.Vierheller, College Park,Maryland and they will be sent free of charge. Four placards make up a set. More than one set will be sent, if requested. Let's see if this bruised fruit problem cannot be, at least, partly solved. Bruising can be greatly reduced but it will require close observation by the owner and all of the hired help to find the many places where bruising occurs as the fruit moves from the fruit spurs to the final package that goes into market or storage.

Jobs Wanted.

Two young fellows, one aged 18, want any kind of farm or orchard work. References can be furnished. They state that they want a job first, and can discuss wages, etc.,afterwards. Write A.F.Vierheller, College Park,Md., if interested.

Apple Box.

Following the Apple Box Conference held in New York, a printed sheet was issued by Mr.W.P. Cole, of Massachusetts, who was Secretary of the Conference. This sheet is enclosed. The Eastern Box is coming into use, and the information enclosed is merely for guidance of growers who are now using, or are planning to use the box. The 1 1/5 bushel box has been selected as the one best adapted to the "face and fill" pack. There are several sizes being used, but it is hoped that in time, the one size will be adopted as a standard package where growers use Eastern boxes.

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Your grader may be stream-lined, but a few pads will improve it.

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Marking of Packages.

In Illinois, it is now required that all closed packages of fruits and vegetables be marked with grade and growers' names, not only on the lid but on the side of the package,as some unscrupulous persons have been changing lids on "Unclassified" grade packages. It is illegal in most states, and also according to Government law, to misbrand packages, yet with the use of second-hand packages, all

sorts of mis-branding appears on the lids and sides of the packages. Growers are going to use second-hand packages, here and there, but the second-hand package dealer should be compelled to remove all marking from the baskets before they are resold.

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When the full picking bags jostle down
the ladders, what happens to the apples?

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The Summer Meeting.

About 150 people attended the summer meeting at Gardenhour Brothers orchard, Smithsburg, July 19th. The benefits of terraced land in erosion control were seen in a young peach orchard planted on the contour. There was no soil "wash" and the trees showed considerably more growth due to more moisture supply. In an older orchard, terraced after planting, it was noted that there was deeper foliage color where trees were near the terraces, along the hill slopes. After lunch, served in the packing house, soil erosion and conservation were discussed by O.C. Bruce, and M.D. Moore. Soil Improvement Practices for Maryland Orchardists, as related to the Soil Conservation & Domestic Allotment Act were distributed at the meeting, in pamphlet form. (Write University of Maryland Extension Service, College Park, Maryland, or see your County Agricultural Agent for your copy).

Mr. G. William Gardenhour welcomed the group, and stressed the packing of the best fruit possible. He found that it paid to cull out closely, as some of his trade reported that they made money on his peaches where they lost money on cheaper but poorly graded peaches. He explained the use of Oriental fruit moth bait-pails in peach trees, using quart motor oil cans with wire bails. These cans were filled with a mixture of 1 part glutrin to 20 parts water, and 1 quart terpinyl acetate to 250 gallons of water. (Approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ gals. of glutrin, and 1/10 pint of terpinyl acetate to 50 gallons of water). These pails are dumped and refilled weekly, and Mr. Gardenhour reported good results from their use. The question of shipping green peaches was discussed, but no conclusion was reached. It was agreed to be bad practice, largely due to buyers, also to growers who wanted to get into an early market. Precooling and icing were discussed. Growers were cautioned to reduce the bruising of their fruit in packing operations. An inspection of commercial and educational exhibits, visiting among friends, and an orchard tour rounded out the day. It was pleasing to see growers present from the neighboring states.

Growers Wise-Advertise.

It is not too late to sign up for Appalachian Apples, Inc., the apple advertising plan comprising Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The plan is starting its third year. It is going along nicely, but the help of every grower is needed to put more punch into it, and to make it bigger. Think it over, seriously. Drop a card to A.F. Vierheller, College Park, Md., asking for a sign-up blank. You'll feel better by helping your industry.

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Fruit has tender feelings. Why bruise them?

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The Winter Fruit Show.

It is planned to hold the Fruit Show in Baltimore again this year. Better save out some good fruit. It is a good advertisement for your business, and in time, the expectations are that a revival of the old Maryland Farm Products Show will be possible. More will be said about this, as soon as final plans are worked out.

A.F.Vierheller,
Extension Horticulturist.

College Park,Maryland.